

REMARKS

In this Office Action, the Examiner stated that "In view of the appeal brief filed on 12/31/07, PROSECUTION IS HEREBY REOPENED. New grounds of rejection are set forth below."

Next, the Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a) by stating that

"The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the push rod and a shield as recited in claim 10 must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s).

No new matter should be entered. Examiner notes that the shield is shown at elements 64, 66, and 76 as explained by Applicant in the drawing objection petition, but the push rod is not shown. Applicant points to elements 72 and 74 as representing the push rod.

However, in paragraph [0039] of the application, Applicant describes element 72 as a force transfer lever engaging portion and element 74 as a cavity. Examiner also notes that elements 64, 66, and 76 appear to represent the recited the first vertical plate member, horizontal plate member, and second vertical plate member, respectively. See 112 rejection below."

In compliance with this requirement, the feature "push rod and shield member in claim 10 has been canceled.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the objection to the drawings.

The, the Examiner objected to the specification as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(0) and required correction of the following: "The specification fails to provide proper antecedent basis for the term "control linkage" recited in line 2 from the bottom of claim 1."

Claim 1 has been amended and now specifically recites "...a ~~control~~ an actuating linkage of such railway vehicle brake assembly". The support for this amendment can be found in page 11 lines 306 of the Specification. No new matter has been entered.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the objection to the specification.

Further in the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 1-13 and 16-21 to because of the following informalities:

"the phrase "plate like" first recited in line 1 of subparagraph (a) of claim 1 must be changed to remove the term "like." Appropriate correction is required. This example is not intended to be exhaustive. The use of the term "like" exists throughout the claims. The remaining claims are objected to due to their dependency from one of claims 1, 6, 9, and 19.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to note that tem "like" has been canceled in all claims.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the objection to claims 1-13 and 16-21.

Next, the Examiner objected to claims 9-13 and 16-18 because of the following informalities: "the term "forth" in line 13 from the bottom should be changed to --fourth--. Appropriate correction is required. The remaining claims are objected to due to their dependency from claim 9."

Claim 9 has been amended as requested by the Examiner.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the objection to claims 9-13 and 16-18.

Then, the Examiner objected to claims 6-8 because of the following informalities:

"the phrase "foreign when" in the second to last line of subparagraph (a) in claim 6 should be reworded. Appropriate correction is required. The remaining claims are objected to due to their dependency from claim 6."

Claim 6 has been amended to comply with the Examiner's requirement and now specifically recites "...detrimental extraneous foreign matter when such railway car mounted brake assembly is in use".

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the objection to the claims 6-8.

The Examiner also rejected claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner stated that

"It is unclear to the Examiner whether the shield member recited in lines 2-3 from the bottom of claim 10 is intended to be different or the same as the two vertical plate members and the horizontal plate member recited in claim 9. In the drawing objection petition, Applicant explained that elements 64, 76, and 66 represented the shield, however, as best understood, elements 64 and 76 represent 2 of the vertically disposed plate members and element 66 represents one of the horizontally disposed plate members recited in claim 9. Again, it is unclear to the Examiner whether the shield is intended to include the vertical and horizontal plate members or is it intended to be distinct from the plate members. Clarification is required."

The Examiner is respectfully requested to note that claim 10 has been amended to clarify "~~...a push rod and a shield member for substantially protecting said at least one air bag spring from foreign matter damage~~ pair of elongated members, each of said pair of elongated members extending outwardly and substantially perpendicular to said first substantially vertically disposed plate and having an aperture formed therethrough adjacent to and spaced from a distal end thereof"

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the objection to the claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. 112,

second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Moving onto more substantive issues, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5-7, 9, 11-13, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 6792704 to Johnson in view of US Patent 6116385 to Ring. In support of this rejection, the Examiner stated that

"Re: claim 1. Johnson shows in figures 1 and 2 an actuating member capable of being used for a railway vehicle brake assembly, such vehicle brake assembly having an air bag actuator 1 incorporated therein, said actuating member comprising: a first substantially vertically disposed plate like member or one of elements 20, said first substantially vertically disposed plate like having a first substantially planar surface engageable, via intervening elements 18(b), with a first surface of a second substantially vertically disposed plate like member or other of elements 20 attached to such air bag actuator, a substantially horizontally disposed plate like member 18(b) connected to the first substantially vertically disposed plate like member adjacent a bottom edge thereof and extending substantially perpendicular to the first planar surface of the first vertically disposed plate member for shielding at least a first portion of the air bag actuator from foreign material as shown, and a means 17 connected to a radially opposed second surface of the first vertically disposed plate like member via intervening elements for securing the actuating member to a control linkage 5 of the assembly. Johnson is silent with regards to the vehicle brake assembly being a railway vehicle brake assembly.

Ring teaches in figures 1 and 3 the use of a brake assembly being in the form of a railway vehicle brake.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified vehicle brake assembly of Johnson to have been railway vehicle brake system, as taught by Ring, in order to provide a means of controlling movement between components of a rail vehicle to improve the feel of the ride on the rail vehicle.

Re: claims 2 and 3. Johnson, as modified, shows in figures 1 and 2 of Johnson wherein the actuating member further includes a first plate like member 19 connected to an upper surface of the substantially horizontally disposed member via intervening elements and to the first planar surface of the first substantially vertically disposed plate like member adjacent a first side edge thereof and extending substantially perpendicularly to at least the substantially horizontally disposed member for shielding at least a second portion of such air bag actuator from the detrimental extraneous foreign material and for providing added strength between the first substantially vertically disposed member and the substantially horizontally disposed member. With regards to claim 2, the second plate like member is the other element 19 shown behind element 4 in figure 2.

Re: claim 5. Johnson, as modified, shows in figure 1 of Johnson the means 17 including at least one plate member 17 having an aperture formed therethrough shown surrounding element 12 and a pin member 12 disposed in the aperture for securing the at least one plate member to such control linkage.

Re: claim 6. Johnson shows in figures 1 and 3 an apparatus for mounting an air bag actuator to at least one brake beam, the air bag actuator having at least one inflatable air bag spring 3, the apparatus comprising: a first substantially vertically disposed plate like member or one of elements 20 having a planar surface portion for engagement with a substantially planar surface portion of a second substantially vertically disposed plate like member or the other of

elements 20 connected to such air bag actuator, the first substantially vertically disposed plate like member exposing at least a first portion of an exterior surface of such at least one inflatable air bag spring to an atmospheric operating environment characterized by a presence of detrimental extraneous foreign when such car mounted brake assembly is in use, a guide means 18(a) directly connected to and disposed closely adjacent a first outer edge of and substantially perpendicular to the planar surface portion of the first substantially vertically disposed plate like member for guiding and alignment during reciprocal motion of such air bag actuator and a securing means 12,17 connected to the first substantially vertically disposed plate like member via intervening element such as element 13 for enabling attachment of the apparatus to a rigid structure.

Johnson is silent with regards to the vehicle brake assembly being a railway vehicle brake assembly.

Ring teaches in figures 1 and 3 the use of a brake assembly being in the form of a railway vehicle brake.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified vehicle brake assembly of Johnson to have been a railway vehicle brake system, as taught by Ring, in order to provide a means of controlling movement between components of a rail vehicle to improve the feel of the ride on the rail vehicle.

Re: claim 7. Johnson, as modified, teach in figures 1 and 2 of Johnson, the limitation wherein the apparatus includes a second guide means 18(b), the second guide means directly connected to and disposed closely adjacent a second outer edge of and substantially perpendicular to the planar surface portion of the first substantially vertically disposed plate like member for guiding and alignment during reciprocal motion of the air bag actuator.

Re: claim 9. Johnson shows in figures 1 and 2 an air spring actuator assembly, the air spring actuator assembly comprising: at least one air bag spring 3 having at least a first portion of an

exterior surface exposed to an atmospheric operating environment characterized by a presence of detrimental extraneous foreign material during use of the air spring actuator assembly, a first substantially vertically disposed plate like member or one of elements 20, the first substantially vertically disposed plate like member having a first substantially planar surface engageable with a first surface of a second substantially vertically disposed plate like member or the other of elements 20 attached to the at last one air bag spring, a substantially horizontally disposed plate like member 18(b) connected to the first substantially vertically disposed plate like member adjacent a bottom edge thereof and extending substantially perpendicular to the first substantially planar surface of the first substantially vertically disposed plate like member for shielding the at least said first portion of the exterior surface of the at least one air bag spring from the detrimental extraneous foreign material, a means 4 connected via intervening elements to a radially opposed second surface of the first substantially vertically disposed plate like member for securing the first substantially vertically disposed plate like member to a control linkage 6 of a vehicle brake assembly via intervening elements, a third substantially vertically disposed plate like member or one of elements 17 having a second planar surface portion for engagement with a substantially planar surface portion of a fourth substantially vertically disposed plate like member or other of elements 17 via intervening elements connected to the at least one air bag spring via intervening elements, a guide means 18(a) connected to and disposed closely adjacent a first outer edge of and substantially perpendicular to at least one of the first substantially planar surface and' the second planar surface portion of a respective one of the first and the third substantially vertically disposed plate like member for guiding and alignment during reciprocal motion of the air bag spring and a securing means 12 connected to the third substantially vertically disposed plate like

member for enabling attachment of the air spring actuator assembly to a rigid structure.

Johnson is silent with regards to the vehicle brake assembly being a railway vehicle brake assembly.

Ring teaches in figures 1 and 3 the use of a brake assembly being in the form of a railway vehicle brake.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified vehicle brake assembly of Johnson to have been a railway vehicle brake system, as taught by Ring, in order to provide a means of controlling movement between components of a rail vehicle to improve the feel of the ride on the rail vehicle.

Re: claims 11 and 12. Johnson, as modified, shows in figures 1 and 2 of Johnson the means for limiting reciprocal motion being in the form of a plate shown between the top of air spring 3 and the plate 18(a).

Re: claims 13 and 18. See the air inlet connected to the line on which elements 26 and 27 are located as shown in figure 2 of Johnson. The means for controlling volume of air includes element 26. "

Regarding claim 1, the Examiner stated that "*Johnson shows in figures 1 and 2 an actuating member capable of being used for a railway vehicle brake assembly...*" This is a mere allegation by the Examiner since there is no evidence or suggestion in Johnson that his actuator is suitable for use on the railway vehicle braking system. Johnson's invention is in the art of snowplow vehicle and, more specifically, for the purpose of controlling contact between ground engaging components of the snowplow and the road. Thus, Applicant believes that Johnson is a non-analogous art as an artisan having common sense at the

time of the invention would not have reasonably looked in the ground engagement control in a snowplow vehicle art for the purpose of solving problem on a railway vehicle braking system.

Furthermore, the Examiner stated that *"Ring teaches in figures 1 and 3 the use of a brake assembly being in the form of a railway vehicle brake ... It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified vehicle brake assembly of Johnson to have been railway vehicle brake system, as taught by Ring, in order to provide a means of controlling movement between components of a rail vehicle to improve the feel of the ride on the rail vehicle."*

In a first aspect, the Examiner's motivation to combine the references is in error. The present invention is not concerned with "improving the feel of the ride" as the brake system of the present invention is employed on freight cars wherein "feel of the ride" is a moot issue.

In a second aspect, since Johnson is in the snowplow vehicle art, Applicant finds "no suggestion to combine the teachings and suggestions of Johnson and Ring, as advanced by the Examiner, except from using Applicant's invention as a template through a hindsight reconstruction of Applicants claims." *Ex Parte Crawford et al*, Appeal 20062429, Decided May 30, 2007"

More importantly, it is believed that the Examiner erred in understanding Johnson's invention of FIGS. 1-2 and applying it as teaching each claim limitation of the present invention (The Examiner is respectfully requested to note that the Examiner applied Ring reference to demonstrate the environment only).

As Applicant best understood, the Examiner found that:

1. One of elements 20 of Johnson constitutes a first substantially vertically disposed plate like member 60 of the present invention;

2. An inner surface of this one element 20 (in Item 1 above) of Johnson constitutes a first substantially planar surface (66) of the plate like member 60 present invention.

3. An inner surface of another element 20 of Johnson constitutes a surface 54 attached to airbag 52 of the present invention;

4. Both inner surfaces of elements 20 of Johnson are connected via intervening elements 18(b) which constitutes connection of the surface 66 to surface 54 of the present invention;

5. Element 18(b) (same element as in Item 4 above) also constitutes a substantially horizontally disposed plate like member 64 of the present invention; and

6. Means 17 of Johnson connected to a radially opposed second (outer) surface of the element 20 of Johnson via

intervening elements constitutes means 72/74 of the present invention for "securing actuating member to a control linkage"

The Examiner is respectfully requested to note that no elements in Johnson, either directly or indirectly (via intervening elements) is connected to "opposed" surface of element 20. At best, means 17 of Johnson is engageable with the inner surface of the element 20 via element 18(a). Furthermore, inner surface of elements 20 are not attached or connected to the surface of the air bag, but element 18(b) does. Finally, element 20 of Johnson and not its element 18(b) is operable for shielding the exposed exterior surface of the airbag.

Thus, since the Examiner applied Ring reference to demonstrate the environment only, the combination of Johnson and Ring fails to teach all claim limitations of the claimed subject matter of claim 1.

Accordingly, it is believed that the combination of Johnson and Ring fails to establish *prima facie* case of obviousness of the claimed invention of the independent claim 1.

Claims 2-3 and 5 are depending from claim 1 and should be allowed as it is believed that claim 1 is in a condition for allowance over the combination of Johnson and Ring.

Regarding claimed subject matters of claims 6 and 9, the Examiner is respectfully requested to note that the above arguments regarding claim 1 also stand as to claims 6 and 9.

Thus, it is believed that the combination of Johnson and Ring fails to establish *prima facie* case of obviousness of the claimed invention of the independent claims 6 and 9.

Claim 7 is depending from claim 6 and should be allowed as it is believed that claim 6 is in a condition for allowance over the combination of Johnson and Ring.

Claims 11-13 are depending from claim 9 and should be allowed as it is believed that claim 9 is in a condition for allowance the combination of Johnson and Ring.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claims 1-3, 5-7, 9, 11-13, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 6792704 to Johnson in view of US Patent 6116385 to Ring.

Next, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5-7, 9, 11-13, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson in view of Ring and further in view of US Patent 6142480 to Streitman et al. The Examienr stated that

"Johnson, as modified, is not explicit with regards to the operating environment being characterized by a presence of detrimental extraneous foreign material.

Streitman et al. teach in col. 1 the use of a railway vehicle brake being in the environment characterized by a presence of detrimental extraneous foreign material.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have included a surrounding environment

characterized by detrimental extraneous foreign material, as taught by Streitman et al., since it is old and well-known in the art that vehicles operate in an environment marked by detrimental extraneous foreign material such as vehicle emissions and other harmful by products output from other machines."

Since it has been shown above that the combination of Johnson and Ring fails to establish *prima facie* case of obviousness of the claimed invention of the independent claims 1, 6 and 9, the combination of Johnson, Ring and Streitman et al. also fails to establish *prima facie* case of obviousness of the claimed invention of these calims.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claims 1-3,5-7,9, 11-13, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson in view of Ring and further in view of US Patent 6142480 to Streitman et al.

Then, the Examiner rejected claims 4 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson in view of Ring and further in view of US Patent 3768826 to Hickman by stating that

"Johnson, as modified, shows the vertically disposed plate member being attached to the horizontal plate member of the air bag actuator, but is silent with regards to the attachment resulting from apertures (through which fasteners pass).

Hickman teaches. in figure 15 the use of a vertically disposed plate 105 having at least one aperture (shown corresponding to the apertures on element 119) for enabling attachment to a horizontally disposed plate member 116 by way of fasteners passing through the at least one aperture.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the means for enabling fastening of Johnson, as modified, to have included apertures, as taught by Hickman, in order to provide a functionally equivalent means of fastening two components to ensure proper operation of the device and two improve reliability."

Claim 4 is depending from claim 1 and claim 8 is depending from claim 6 and should be allowed as it is believed that claims 1 and 6 are in a condition for allowance.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claims 4 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson in view of Ring and further in view of US Patent 3768826 to Hickman.

Further in the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 4 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson in view of Ring and Hickman and further in view of Streitman et al. The Examienr stated that

"Johnson, as modified, is not explicit with regards to the operating environment being characterized by a presence of detrimental extraneous foreign material, Streitman et al. teach in col. 1 the use of a railway vehicle brake being in the environment characterized by a

presence of detrimental extraneous foreign material.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have included a surrounding environment characterized by detrimental extraneous foreign material, as taught by Streitman et al., since it is old and well-known in the art that vehicles operate in an environment marked by detrimental extraneous foreign material such as vehicle emissions and other harmful byproducts output from other machines.

Claims 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson in view of Ring as applied to claim 9 above, and further in view of US Patent 4846785 to Cassou et al. Johnson, as modified, describes the invention substantially as set forth above, but does not include the limitation of a visual travel indicator.

Cassou et al. teach in col. 4 lines 2-5 the limitation of an actuator including a visual travel indicator or markings 20.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Johnson, as modified, to have included a visual travel indicator, as taught by Cassou et al., in order to provide a means of monitoring the operation of the air spring actuator to ensure that is inflating and deflating to acceptable levels."

Claim 4 is depending from claim 1 and claim 8 is depending from claim 6 and should be allowed as it is believed that claims 1 and 6 are in a condition for allowance.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claims 4 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson in view of Ring and Hickman and further in view of Streitman et al.

Next, the Examiner rejected claims 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson and Ring in view of Streitman et al. as applied to claim 9 above, and further in view of US Patent 4846785 to Cassou et al. by stating that

"Johnson, as modified, describes the invention substantially as set forth above, but does not include the limitation of a visual travel indicator.

Cassou et al. teach in col. 4 lines 2-5 the limitation of an actuator including a visual travel indicator or markings 20.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Johnson, as modified, to have included a visual travel indicator, as taught by Cassou et al., in order to provide a means of monitoring the operation of the air spring actuator to ensure that is inflating and deflating to acceptable levels."

Claims 16-17 are depending from claim 9 and should be allowed as it is believed that claim 9 is in a condition for allowance.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claims 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson and Ring in view of Streitman et al. as applied to claim 9 above, and further in view of US Patent 4846785 to Cassou et al.

The, the Examiner rejected claims 19, 20, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Admitted prior art recited above the "improvement" phrase in claim 19 in view of Johnson. In support of this rejection, the Examiner stated that

"The admitted prior art recites the railway environment, but the admitted prior art is silent as to the specific detail of the air spring actuator.

Johnson teaches in figures 1 and 2 an air spring actuator 1 comprising: a first substantially vertically disposed plate like member or one of elements 20 having a first substantially planar surface and a means 12 connected to the first substantially vertically disposed plate like member via intervening elements for securing the air spring actuator to such second control linkage 6, a second substantially vertically disposed plate like member or other of elements 20 having a second substantially planar surface and a means 19 connected to the second substantially vertically disposed plate like member for securing the air spring actuator to one of the beam 10, such second force

transmitting member and a combination thereof, and at least one inflatable air bag spring 3 having a pair of substantially vertically disposed planar surfaces 17,17 for engagement with and attachment to the first substantially planar surface of the first substantially vertically disposed plate like member and the second substantially planar surface of the second substantially vertically disposed plate like member via intervening elements whereby selective inflation and deflation of the at least one inflatable air bag spring in a longitudinal direction enables a reciprocal motion thereof to move such control linkages and such force transmitting members for actuating and deactuating such brake beams wherein an exterior spring is at least partially exposed within such brake assembly to an atmosphere when such brake assembly is in use.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the air spring actuator of the admitted prior art to have included an air spring actuator, as taught by Johnson, in order to provide a means of maintaining the spring brake actuator in an exposed state to facilitate monitoring for maintenance purposes and to provide easy accessibility. With regards to claims 20 and 21, see element 18(a) as the means for shielding and guiding and aligning."

As it has been shown above, Johnson is a non-analogous art and fails to teach all of the claim limitations of the present invention of claim 19.

Claims 20-21 are depending from claim 19 and should be allowed as it is believed that claim 19 is in a condition for allowance.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claims 19, 20, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Admitted prior art recited above the "improvement" phrase in claim 19 in view of Johnson.

Finally, the Examiner rejected claims 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Admitted prior art in view of Johnson and further in view of US Patent 61424480 to Streitman et al.

"Admitted prior art, as modified, is silent with regards to the operating environment being characterized by a presence of detrimental extraneous foreign material.

Streitman et al. teach in col. 1 the use of a railway vehicle brake being in the environment

characterized by a presence of detrimental extraneous foreign material.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have included a surrounding environment characterized by detrimental extraneous foreign material, as taught by Streitman et al., since it is old and well-known in the art that vehicles operate in an environment marked by detrimental extraneous foreign material such as vehicle emissions and other harmful byproducts output from other machines."

As it has been shown above, Johnson is a non-analogous art and fails to teach all of the claim limitations of the present invention of claim 19.

Claims 20-21 depend from claim 19 and should be allowed as it is believed that claim 19 is in a condition for allowance.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claims 19- 21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Admitted prior art in view of Johnson and further in view of US Patent 61424480 to Streitman et al.

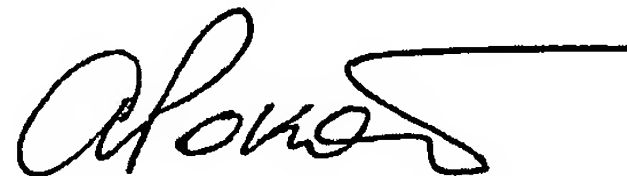
Applicant notes with appreciation that Claim 10 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims (See the drawing objection and 112 rejection with respect to claim 10). Claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form incorporating subject matter of its base claim 9 and therefore is allowable.

CONCLUSIONS

In view of the above amendments to the claims and the remarks associated therewith, Applicant believes that Independent Claims 1, 6, 9, 19 and 22 are in a condition for allowance and such allowance by the Examiner is respectfully requested. Since it is believed that Independent Claims 1, 6, 9, and 19 are in condition for allowance, their dependent claims further providing limitations are also in a condition for allowance.

In the event the Examiner has further difficulties with the election, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned agent by telephone at 847-687-8804 to resolve any remaining questions or issues by interview and/or by Examiner's amendment as to any matter that will expedite the completion of the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,



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